



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dear brothers and sisters of many different faiths,

The new year opens with a sign of hope which we would like to place in God's hands that it may bear good and lasting fruit. Representatives of the **Palestinians** and the government of the **State of Israel** signed an agreement for a truce that is allowing the release of the hostages kidnapped on October 7, 2023, and of many Palestinian prisoners (mostly women and minors), access to medical aid and basic necessities for the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip and the withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces. Although we cannot call it peace, it is a crucial measure that enables victims to get assistance and spares further suffering. As on the 27th of each month in remembering the October 1986 event that witnessed the presence of numerous members of different religions gathered in prayer in Assisi to ask for the gift of peace, we also continue with this same intention to ask the one God to guard the outcome of the ceasefire and transform it into total peace. May it be a sign for other ongoing armed conflicts as well!

On January 27, we are also called to remember the tragedy of the extermination wrought against the Jews in the concentration camps and to pray and work actively so that there will be no more tragedies deliberately carried out by man, that there be an end to anti-Semitism in all its forms and to all discrimination and persecution on religious, ethnic, or racial grounds.

May the God of life and peace preserve us from these misfortunes and grant abundant peace to everyone. May He inspire us to open wide the doors of our hearts to welcome his gift.

May the Lord give you peace

Assisi, January 2025

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop